

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:309

ANSWERED ON:26.07.2006

DECLARATION OF SUNDERBANS WATERWAYS AS NATIONAL WATERWAYS

Mandal Shri Sanat Kumar

Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) the total length of National Waterways under use as of now in the country;
- (b) the steps taken to increase the coverage of National Waterways;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to declare Sunderbans Waterways as National Waterways; and
- (d) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU)

- (a) The total length of three existing National Waterways is 2716 kilometres.
- (b) The Government is considering to declare following inland waterways as National Waterways:
 - (i) Kakinada – Pondicherry Canals alongwith Godavari and Krishna rivers (1095 kms);
 - (ii) East Coast Canal along with Brahmani river and Mahanadi delta (623 kms); and
 - (iii) River Barak (152 kms).

(c) & (d) A proposal to declare International steamer route of Sunderbans as National Waterways was formulated in 1989 and processed by the Government. Subsequently, as directed by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), Environment Impact Assessment study was conducted and the report was submitted to MoEF in 1996. After detailed deliberations including field visits, MoEF did not give the environment clearance and suggested that an alternate route outside the periphery of Sunderbans Tiger Reserve area be explored. The detailed survey of the alternate route has since been completed. However, in the Protocol route falling in Sunderbans, Indian and Bangladesh vessels already ply and development works are also executed by IWA.